GOING HOME TO GREENLAND

THE REMNANT OF THE ESQUIMAU BAND WILL RETURN WITH PEARY.

THEIR STAY HERE HAS BEEN RATHER DISASTROUS, OWING TO INFLUENZA AND A STRANGE CLIMATE—VALUABLE INFORMATION GAINED FROM THEM.

The little band of six Esquimaus whom Lieutenant Peary brought back with him last fall from his preliminary trip to the northwest coast of Greenland has now been reduced to four, through the deaths of a man and a woman of

HAWIA.

the party. Since they left their Northern home last summer, anxious to visit the strange lands of which they had heard from the explorers, these Esquimaus have had a series of hard experiences. They were unfortunate enough to succumb to a severe attack of influenza only two or three days after their arrival, and none of them have ever completely recovered from this shock to their systems, aggravated as its effects were by a strange and trying climate. That the climate alone would necessarily develop tuberculosis—from which one or two of the four survivors are feared to be suffering in greater or less degree—is not believed by many competent authorities. Esquimaus have lived in these latitudes for long periods without becoming ill, and those in charge of the present band say that if they had not fallen victims as soon as they landed to so insidious a disease as influenza, which frequently develops tuberculosis even among natives of this climate, their chances of good health during their stay here would have been excellent. Everything possible has been

MINIK.

done to keep them well and to cure them when they became sick. It was thought that they would be better outside of the city, where they could have purer air, and a cottage was accordingly taken for them at Highbridge. There they have been living throughout the winter, those who fell seriously ill being removed temporarily to Bellevue Hospital for treatment. It was at the hospital that the man Kushin died a month or two ago. Atunga, the only woman of the party, died on March 16 at the Highbridge cottage.

After some searching there was found in the city a woman from Labrador who could talk with the Esquimaus, though with some difficulty, for she was not familiar with many peculiarities of their dialect. This woman was engaged as housekeeper, and she has been in charge of the Esquimaus' cottage ever since. Charles Hansen, Lieutenant Peary's servant on his expeditions, has also acted as an interpreter, having learned to talk the language with considerable ease, and Dr. Franz Boas, of the Museum of Natural History, who is in charge of the Esquimaus, can understand them a little. In speaking of the objects for which these natives of the Arctic country were brought here, Dr. Boas said the other day:

"It was believed that much valuable information of an ethnological character could be obtained from them, and that their presence here would be very instructive to scientists interested in the study of the Northern races. This has, in fact, proved true. Many things heretofore unknown have been learned regarding their language, their traditions and their personal characteristics. Casts of their heads have been made for the museum.

"We are very sorry about the deaths of the man and woman, but we know that everything was done for them to keep them well. The man was the father of the little boy Minik, who is about ten years old. He is a nice little fellow, and has picked up considerable English—more than any of the others. The little girl, Hawia, is eleven or twelve years old. She is not related to any of the others, but she was the adopted daughter of the woman who died."

"What do the Esquimaus do all day?" asked the visitor.

"Oh, we try to give them little things to keep them busy," answered the doctor. "Their work doesn't amount to much, but they have made some carvings, and occupied themselves either indoors or around the place with any employment that suggested itself to them. They do not seem discontented."

"When you found they were sick so much, didn't you think of sending them North again?"

"Yes, but there was no opportunity to send them. There were ships going north as far as Newfoundland and Labrador, but that would not

MIAKAPSIA.

have been anywhere near their home, and we could not land them in a strange country. When Lieutenant Peary starts on his trip this summer he will take them back with him. They are all fond of him, and were delighted at the prospect of coming here last summer."

The attendants at Bellevue Hospital, who were in charge of the Esquimaus on their frequent visits for treatment, became much attached to the children. Minik, the little boy, was known as "Meeny" in the hospital, and he became as great a pet in his ward as the little girl Hawia was in hers. The nurses amused themselves by teaching the children English words. Miakapsia and Nukta, the two men who are the only others of the party now living, have also been at the hospital occasionally. Nukta is the oldest of the band, and his face is covered with deep wrinkles. He, Miakapsia and the children will make up the party which will be taken home by Peary.

PETROLEUM IN PAINT EXPLODES.

From The Scientific American.

Explosions caused by paint mixed with petroleum ether are said to have occurred frequently of late in England. The admixture of petroleum ether is made to hasten the drying of the paint. Aside from the recent accidents with such paints in the interior of vessels, attention is called to the fire in former years on the man-of-war Dotterel, where 151 persons lost their lives. Hence great caution is recommended in employing such paints; in closed rooms their use should be entirely prohibited.

EXPERIMENTS WITH NICOTINE.

From The American Druggist.

Professor J. U. Lloyd has made a very thorough study of the effect of nicotine on insects (the Professor does not smoke), and has devised methods for extracting and using it as a parasiticide in sheep dips, plant sprays, etc. He has sold his right to an Eastern company on a royalty basis, and this company, which has now been operating for some two years in Chicago, has now arranged for the erection of a large factory in St. Louis.

DO ANIMALS TALK?

INSTANCES OF INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT MEMBERS OF THE BRUTE CREATION.

From The Spectator.

If animals talk, as we are convinced that they do, to the extent of conveying wishes or facts by sounds, their speech ought to conform to the divisions of human speech. There must, in fact, be an "animal grammar," in the terms of which they express themselves. It is no bad test of the assertion that animal speech exists to apply the old formal divisions of the grammarians to the instances in which they appear to "voice" their thoughts, and ascertain by trial whether the forms into which the human speech has been divided fit the latter. The time-honored divisions of speech are (1) statement of fact; (2) request, including commands; (3) question. It is not to be supposed that the very limited range and simple character of animal wants and ideas would necessarily bring into play the whole of this category of articulate speech. But, as a fact, they do need to use all three forms of expression, but omit the last. Unlike children, animals do not ask questions. They only "look" them, and, though they constantly and anxiously inquire what is to be done, how it is to be done, and the exact wishes of their masters, and occasionally even of other animals, the inquiry is made by the eye and attitude. A terrier, for instance, can almost transform his whole body into an animated note of interrogation.

THE NOTE OF WARNING.

Of the two remaining forms of speech—statement and request—the animals make very large use, but employ the latter in a far greater degree than the former. They use sounds for request, not only in particular cases in which they desire something to be done for them, but also in a great number of cases in which the request is a form of warning—"Come!" "Be careful!" "Look out!" "Go ahead!" "Help!" The speech which indicates danger is sufficiently differentiated. Birds, for instance, have separate notes of warning to indicate whether the danger is in the form of a hawk or cat, or of a man. If a hawk, cat or owl is on the move the birds, especially blackbirds, always utter a clattering note, constantly repeated, and chickens have a special sound to indicate the presence of a hawk. But when disturbed by man the blackbirds have quite a different sound of alarm and the chickens also. Animals on the march are usually silent; but the hamadryad baboons use several words of command, and the cries of cranes and geese when flying in ordered flocks are very possibly signals or orders.

BRUTE REQUESTS.

Specific requests are commonly made by a sound, which the animal intends to be taken as expressing a want, while it indicates what it wants by showing the object. The greatest difficulty is when the object wanted, or required to be dealt with, is not present. The animal has then to induce you to follow and see the thing, and this often leads to great ingenuity both in the use of voice and action. This form of request is practised more or less successfully by a considerable number of the animals kept as pets or servants of man. Various monkeys, geese, a goat, a ewe with a lamb, elephants, cats very commonly and dogs innumerable are credited with "accosting persons" and bringing to their notice by vocal means the objects they desire or the actions they wish done. A most ingeniously constructed request of this kind was made a few years ago by a retriever dog late one night in London. The streets were empty, and the dog came up and, after wagging his tail, began to bark—using not the rowdy bark which dogs employ when jumping at a horse's head or when excited, but the persuasive and confidential kind of bark which is used in requests and reproaches. He was very insistent, especially when a small, dark passage was reached, up which he ran, still barking. As this did not answer, the dog ran back, and took the writer's hand in which he was carrying his glove, in his mouth, and gave a gentle pull in the direction of the passage. As this did not meet with the attention desired the dog pulled the glove out of the hand and carried it off up the passage, keeping a few yards in front and waving his tail in a friendly way; this naturally led to pursuit, when the dog, still keeping ahead, dropped the glove in front of a gate leading into a butcher's yard, and began to bark again. As he obviously wanted the gate to be opened this was done, and he trotted in without further remark.

Every one who has kept dogs knows the tone of the bark of request—a low "wouf," very unlike the staccato bark of anger, or vexation, or remonstrance. A bulldog at the Earl's Court Dog Show made his particular part of the bench almost unendurable by this form of bark, kept up (as we heard) for nearly three hours without a stop, because he was jealous of the attentions paid to the dog next him. This had won the first prize, and consequently received all the admiration; so the other dog barked short, sharp, incessant yelps at him all day long, only stopping when some one patted him. We believe that leopards are absolutely silent creatures; but many of the felidæ have a particular sound of request. In the cat a very low short mew is commonly used when the object is near, and will almost certainly be granted, such as the opening of a door, or the giving of water or milk. Unusual food which it fancies it will not get is asked for in another note, and any request not attended to is repeated in the different key. The tiger uses the low mew in some form of conversation with the tigress, and the puma when domesticated has a considerable range of notes to ask for food, water and society, or to return thanks; the latter being, as in the case of the cat and tiger, a kind of purr.

"STATEMENTS" OF ANIMALS.

"Statement" in animal speech is mainly confined to indications that the creature has made a discovery, good or bad. For the former the cock has, perhaps, the most distinct set of sounds; they are quite unlike any other note he uses, and are confined to the assertion that he has found something good to eat. Cock pigeons do the same, and we imagine that geese have an equivalent sound. Dogs have two forms of sound to state a discovery, elephants only one. The dog barks loud and sharply over something new, or merely surprising. We have seen a dog barking in this way when a couple of geographical globes were placed in a window—objects he had never seen and wished to call attention to. But a painful discovery, such as that of a dead body or a dangerously wounded man, is sometimes communicated by the dog howling—which marks a different form of speech. A practical acquaintance with shore shooting and the men who have learned to imitate the notes of shore birds discloses some curious facts as to the minute differences between the "talk" of different species. The greater number have a particular note which signifies "Come," and this note seems always to be understood and generally obeyed, almost instantly, by the birds of the same species, though no bird of another species pays the slightest attention to it. But the few shore birds which are really "talkative"—namely, the wild geese, the redshank, and the green plover—pay very little attention to the calls either of their own species or of any one who can imitate them. We never heard of any one who has ever tried to "call" wild geese. Green plover can be called, but very seldom; and though redshanks can sometimes be whistled within shot, this is rarely done.

HUNTERS' USE OF BIRDCALLS.

The difference between the notes of invitation made by various shore fowl—stints, gray plover, golden plover, ringed plover, knots and sandpipers—is so slight that no one but a fowler would notice them. Yet to these men the difference is as great as that between the sound of French and English. A really first-class gunner will sit in a creek in August and call the birds up, if within hearing and inclined to move, in any order you like to name. Even such closely allied birds as the curlew and the whimbrel have different notes, though, as they are so often associated on the marshes, one species will often answer to the call made by the other, probably in the expectation of finding some of its own tribe in the same place. It is not a little surprising that these different birds, most of which feed in company, should not have learned a common "all-fowls' tongue," but they have not.

We once saw a large mixed flock of gray plover, knots and stints flying past on the muds, at a distance of some ninety yards. A gunner noticed that there were two or three golden plover among them. These are easy to call, and all fowl are more likely to answer to the call when only two or three of the same species are together. The gunner, therefore, whistled the golden plovers' note, and from the big flock of some sixty birds the pair of golden plovers instantly flew out, wheeled round, and passed within fifty yards, answering the call in their own language. Perhaps the best instance of the dexterity of the gunners in learning bird language was recently recorded in "The Westminster Gazette." It is credited to a fowler who shot the only specimen of the broad-billed sandpiper ever killed in Norfolk. When down on the muds listening to the notes of the shore birds he distinguished one which he did not know. He imitated it, the bird answered, flew up to him and was shot.

It does not follow that talkative, garrulous species really have more to say to one another than others. Like other chatterboxes, they like to hear themselves, and do not listen to other people. Starlings, for instance, which seem almost to talk, and certainly can imitate other birds when engaged in their curious "song," which seems so like a conversational variety entertainment, are all the time enjoying a monologue. No other starling listens. On the other hand, starlings, when they have anything to say, as when nesting or quarrelling for places when going to roost, use quite different notes. Of all bird voices the song of the swallow is most like human speech—not our speech, but like the songs which the Lapp or such outlandish races sing. A Lapp woman sings a song just like that of a swallow at dawn. Yet the swallows seem really to say little or nothing to one another, and never come to each other's call. But the varieties of bird speech, and the possibilities of interchange of ideas, are very great. If, for instance, there is any real foundation for the stories of the rook trials and stork trials, speech must play a considerable part in the proceedings.

THE ENGINEER IN WARFARE.

From The Engineer (New-York).

The present agitation in connection with a possible outbreak of war brings to the public mind most forcibly the remarkable extent to which engineering has entered into all the details of modern warfare. Whether war occurs or not, it cannot but be realized that it is to the work of the engineer more than to any other member of the community that the country must look for defence and offence, and that it is the machine shops and shipyards, in the draughting-rooms and mechanical laboratories that the destinies of modern nations are to be decided.

One has only to look back a few hundred years in history and note the absolute transformation wrought in warfare as soon as the introduction of gunpowder and fire artillery became an accomplished fact. The trained knight, bred to arms, and honestly believing that in him lay all the science of warfare that could ever be possible, was suddenly transformed into a ridiculous Don Quixote, helpless before the rude band of peasants who, with their "villanous saltpetre," made all his knowledge of the art of war obsolete. To-day we are undoubtedly on the verge of a similar transformation, and should the misfortune of war become a dire necessity there is every reason to believe that the ingenuity of American engineers, constructors and inventors would evolve devices of destruction before which the existing battle-ships and fortifications would soon be relegated to obscurity. Two instances of most recent occurrence have demonstrated the weakness of modern warships; one the ease with which the single blow of a ram sent the Victoria to the bottom of the Mediterranean, the other the havoc which a single explosion wrought upon the Maine in Havana Harbor. The modern warship is fatally like the armored knight of mediæval times, vulnerable because of exceeding bulk and clumsiness, a fair mark for the skill of the engineer who can combine force and motion and substitute rapidity for massiveness and secrecy for strength.

HE CAPTURED GENERAL MERRITT.

From The Atlanta Journal.

There is an old ex-Confederate officer in Knoxville, Tenn., who had the honor during the Civil War of capturing Wesley H. Merritt, now General commanding the Department of the East, and in case of war with Spain likely to be one of the leading military officers. Colonel James C. Malone, a prominent cavalryman, was the captor of General Merritt. It was during the campaign in West Virginia in 1862, and in the neighborhood of Cheek Mountain, that the incident occurred. General Rust had been ordered to attack a strong force of Federals on the mountain, and the 1st Tennessee Regiment, of Maney's Brigade, Lorin's Division, was waiting orders to advance. Colonel Malone was at that time a lieutenant of the Rock City Guards, a company which had gone out from Nashville. While drawn up the company suddenly saw, not a hundred yards in front of them, a Federal engineering officer ride up alone. His capture was easily effected, as he was completely surprised, not having any idea that the Confederates were near. He was very much discomfited at his mishap, and grumbled excessively at his bad luck. He was sent to Richmond with other prisoners, and Colonel Malone did not know his subsequent war career.